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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2243

INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0518

RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP:ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA//

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001259

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2017

TAGS: PREL PTER TU LE

SUBJECT: TURKEY REVIEWING REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO  
LEBANESE ARMED FORCES

REF: STATE 70449

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Carl Siebentritt, reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Per reftel request, we approached MFA Middle East Head of Department Sedat Onal on May 23 with the urgent request for a donation of ammunition to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and for continued public statements by the Turkish government in support of the Lebanese government and the LAF actions in response to Fatah al-Islam attacks. Onal agreed to submit the list of required ammunition to MFA leadership and to the Turkish General Staff (TGS). (Note: The Ankara Office of Defense Cooperation provided the ammunition list directly to TGS authorities on May 23.)

¶12. (C) Onal said that Turkey is closely watching the situation in Lebanon. Foreign Minister Gul called Lebanese PM Siniora on May 22 to express the government's concern that the May 20 attack by FAI was a provocation "with dangerous dimensions" that could be intended to provoke a confrontation between Lebanon and the Palestinians, and offered Turkey's readiness to provide any support or assistance needed. The MFA subsequently issued a press release expressing its concern about the attacks, calling for restraint and offering assistance (informal MFA translation of text provided below).

We welcomed the Ministry's actions and urged additional public statements in support of the Lebanese government and for the establishment of a Special Tribunal under a Chapter VII resolution.

¶13. (C) Regarding a Chapter VII resolution, Onal noted that Turkey had not only supported the establishment of the Hariri Commission but had contributed an investigator to serve on it. Turkey, he said, supports the establishment of a Special Tribunal on Lebanon but the government has not fully evaluated the issue of whether it should be contained in a Chapter VII resolution.

¶14. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF MFA PRESS RELEASE:

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

We are deeply concerned with the fighting between the Lebanese Army and Fatah al-Islam that has claimed the lives of more than 50 people, 30 of whom were members of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

During the delicate period which Lebanon and our region are passing through, we wish that the clashes be ceased at the earliest possible time and the current crisis be contained without harming civilians in the Palestinian refugee camps in

Lebanon.

We strongly condemn the acts of terror that were perpetrated in Beirut's Ahsrafiyeh and Verdun districts. We call upon brotherly people of Lebanon to exercise self-restraint vis-a-vis these provocative acts that aim to escalate the tension in the country.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Abdullah Gul called Mr. Fuad Siniora, Prime Minister of Lebanon, today, expressed our concerns over the said events and pointed out the importance of restoration of calm and the containment of the crisis and Mr. Gul also expressed Turkey's solidarity with the Lebanese government and people and her readiness to provide any assistance and support that may be needed.

It will be recalled that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Abdullah Gul called Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority and Mr. Ismael Haneye, Prime Minister of Palestinian National Authority, last week and expressed Turkey's readiness to do its best in bringing an end to the shed of fraternal blood in Palestine, in maintaining the unity and harmony of the Palestinian people, as well as in assuring the continuation of the functions of the National Unity Government.

END TEXT.

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WILSON